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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES OBEY MEASURE TO REIN IN U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQI CIVIL WAR

WASHINGTON, D.C. â€“ The U.S. House of Representatives today passed H.R. 1591, the Supplemental Appropriations package for FY2007, and voted for the first time to set a timeline for ending U.S. participation in the Iraqi civil war. Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI), the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, authored the measure.

â€œThis package provides for our troops, Katrina families, homeland security, pandemic flu preparedness, and other unmet funding needs,â€ said Obey. â€œBut most importantly, it helps General Petraeus and our own government by sending a signal to the Iraqi politicians that this Congress is going to play bad cop until they get the message that they must step-up because we aren't going to run our babysitting service forever.â€

Obey added that the measure is intended to achieve five goals: 1) ensure that U.S. forces in the field have all of the resources they need; 2) direct more resources to the war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan; 3) improve healthcare for returning service members and veterans; 4) provide for other domestic funding needs that have been left unmet; and 5) pressure Iraqi leaders by setting a date certain for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

To pressure Iraqi leaders to make the compromises necessary to end the chaos that has

resulted from their lack of performance to date, the bill establishes a timeline for ending U.S. participation in Iraq's civil war.

- By July 1st, 2007 the President must certify that Iraq is making meaningful and substantial progress in meeting political and military benchmarks including a militia disarmament program and a plan that equitably shares oil revenues among all Iraqi factions. If the President does not certify - troops must begin immediate redeployment and U.S. troop involvement in the Iraq civil war must be completed by December 2007 (180 days).
- By October 1st, the President must certify that Iraqis have achieved key benchmarks. If he does not make the second certification, troops must begin immediate redeployment to be completed by March of 2008 (180 days).
- Even if he makes both certifications, the Administration must start redeploying the U.S. Military from Iraq by March 1, 2008, and complete the redeployment by August of 2008 (180 days).

To minimize the burdens and maximize the security of our troops, the measure directs the President to adhere to the military's own basic guidelines for: 1) unit readiness; 2) length of time units can be deployed in Iraq; and 3) length of time units must be allowed at home before they return. The bill grants the President the authority to depart from U.S. military guidelines if deemed necessary by issuing a waiver and report explaining the necessity.

To meet the other goals, the measure provides additional funding, including:

- \$1.2 billion more than the President's request to fight al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- \$3.4 billion more for veterans' and defense healthcare to ensure that those systems can provide returning soldiers with the tools they need to overcome their injuries and reclaim their lives. It focuses funds on traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, and improving our military and veterans hospitals.
- \$2.5 billion to address urgent homeland security needs including aviation (explosive detection systems, advanced passenger screening, and air cargo screening), port, container and border security.
- \$1 billion for pandemic flu preparedness, to begin the purchase of vaccines needed to protect us from a global pandemic.

- \$2.9 billion additional funding for Gulf Coast recovery efforts.
- \$750 million to eliminate funding shortfalls in the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- \$400 million to partially restore cuts in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.
- \$500 million for Wildfire Suppression activities at the Forest Service and Interior Department.
- \$3.7 billion for agriculture assistance, largely including a scaled down, reformed disaster program that would only assist those farmers who have met their responsibility to purchase crop assistance.

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* * [Click Here For A Video Of Cong. Obey's Opening Statement](#) * *